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Viewing cable 09ATHENS338, FM BAKOYIANNIS PLANS CALL TO SECRETARY SEEKING

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- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09ATHENS338	2009-03-18 17:00	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Athens

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 000338

DEPARTMENT FOR D, P, EUR (FITZPATRICK, BRINK) NSC FOR
GERMANO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/18/2010
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [GR](#) [TU](#) [OSCE](#)
SUBJECT: FM BAKOYIANNIS PLANS CALL TO SECRETARY SEEKING
SUPPORT FOR OSCE INFORMAL MINISTERIAL

Classified By: AMBASSADOR DANIEL V. SPECKHARD. REASON:
1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: At a March 17 dinner, Foreign Minister
Bakoyiannis told Ambassador Speckhard that, in her capacity

as OSCE Chairperson in Office, she wanted to speak with the Secretary to discuss two linked issues: her plans to move forward on OSCE's mission in Georgia and her proposal to host an informal OSCE ministerial in July to discuss European security architecture. Bakoyiannis also underscored the domestic pressure she is under as a result of the upcoming POTUS visit to Turkey; she urged a stopover in Greece or an early invitation for the Prime Minister to visit Washington. END SUMMARY.

OSCE INFORMAL MINISTERIAL IN JULY?

12. (C) Bakoyiannis told the Ambassador that she wanted to speak to the Secretary about her plans, as Chairman in Office, for dealing with continued Russian resistance to the OSCE mission in Georgia. She was determined to succeed, and would be travelling to Georgia the week of March 23. However, to be successful, she believed she needed to be able to give the Russians something more on the discussion of European security architecture.

13. (C) Bakoyiannis noted that she had talked to a number of her European counterparts and received a positive reaction to the idea of an informal Gymnich-style OSCE meeting at the ministerial level in early July, either in Corfu or Crete (she was considering July 9). Her idea would be an informal exchange of views at the ministerial level that would serve as a kick-off for follow-up working level discussions. These in turn would lead to an opportunity for a "Helsinki plus" engagement at the formal OSCE ministerial in December. Bakoyiannis did not provide further details, simply noting that while the discussion at Helsinki was a good start, her proposed informal ministerial would allow participants to show their serious willingness to engage in the dialogue -- even if there was no commitment to the Russian proposals. Bakoyiannis said she was hopeful that, with a commitment by Secretary Clinton to participate in the informal meeting in July, she would have enough to get Russian support on Georgia.

POTUS TRIP TO TURKEY RAISES PROBLEMS FOR GREEK POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

15. (C) The Foreign Minister also took the opportunity to raise with the Ambassador her frustration over the breaking of precedent: a Presidential visit to Turkey without a visit to Greece. This was causing her and the Government serious political problems that they could ill afford at a sensitive time in Greek domestic politics. Bakoyiannis expressed concern that it would undermine efforts to renew and strengthen Greek-US relations at this new juncture.

16. (C) In response, the Ambassador urged Bakoyiannis to see the visit in a different light. Greece stood to benefit greatly by the additional attention the new Administration was paying to its neighbor and to the Muslim world in general. Bakoyiannis remained unmoved, highlighting the renewed Aegean tensions between Greece and Turkey which, she said, made it critical that the President consider a stop-over on his way to or from Ankara. Ambassador Speckhard told her this was highly unlikely, emphasizing all the ways the administration was engaging Greece at a high level: her own visit to Washington, the upcoming Greek Independence Day ceremony at the White House, and the Minister of Defense's visit in April. Bakoyiannis nevertheless urged that, at a minimum, an invitation be extended soon to the Greek PM to visit Washington at some point in the future.

COMMENT

17. (C) FM Bakoyiannis was more agitated than we have seen her in a long time, with the perceived slight to Greece through the upcoming visit causing her serious trouble in Greece's highly charged political environment. We believe she is sincere in saying she needs the informal ministerial to work the Russian angle on the OSCE mission to Georgia (an idea that may have been in the works prior to the announcement of the POTUS visit). But clearly an OSCE ministerial would also give her some relief in the press, not

only through the prominent role Greece would play in hosting such an event, but also through an early visit to Greece by Secretary Clinton.

SPECKHARD